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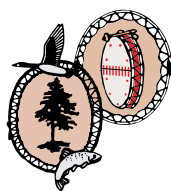
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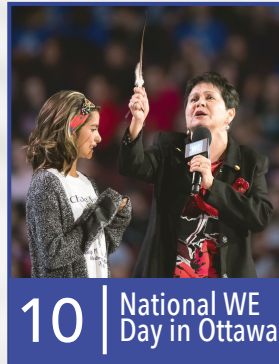
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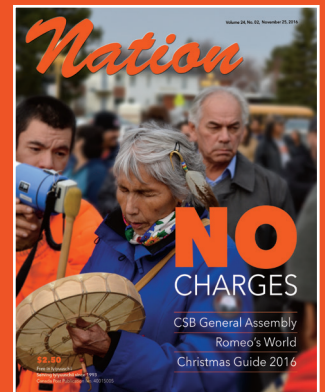


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Justice is not colour blind

by Will Nicholls



A number of developing stories this past month demonstrate quite clearly that there are two distinct standards of law in North America when it comes to First Nations people on this continent.

Consider the case of Adam Capay. Capay is a member of Lac Seul First Nation, who is currently awaiting trial on charges of first-degree murder in the 2012 death of a fellow inmate at Thunder Bay Correctional Centre.

Ever since that incident four and a half years ago – until media attention led to a public outcry – Capay was held in solitary confinement at the Thunder Bay Jail, a provincial maximum-security institution. He spent 23 hours alone in his cell each day, where the bright lights are never dimmed, only permitted out for an hour each day to shower and perhaps make a phone call. According to the United Nations, more than two weeks of solitary confinement meets the definition of torture.

Capay has since been moved to another cell with better lighting controls, and access to day rooms, showers, phone calls and television. But that may only be temporary, until the media attention dies down.

In this case, an old First Nations saying definitely applies: “Justice? Look

at the jails, it’s just us.” Indeed, in federal prisons, Aboriginals represent 25% of the inmate population, about the same as in the Ontario provincial system, despite being only about 3% of Canada’s population as a whole. In Saskatchewan provincial jails, Aboriginals account for 81% of the inmates.

Meanwhile, down at the Standing Rock Sioux reservation in North Dakota, First Nations protest camps

are being sprayed with unknown substances from an airplane. This would appear to break any number of US and state laws – including laws on terrorism – but are the thousands of law enforcement officers present to prevent any interruption of the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline investigating these crimes? To ask the question is to answer it. Of course not.

Then there is the blue elephant in the room right here in Quebec. Six SQ police officers in Val-d’Or faced a year-long investigation by the Montreal Police Service of 37 complaints

lodged against them of abusing and taking sexual advantage of Aboriginal women. According to a media leak days before prosecutors were to make an announcement last week, the suspended police officers received a letter from the Montreal police that said they would not be facing any charges.

Mistissini resident Errol Mianscum’s reaction was typical. “If those were non-Native women making these accusations, it would be a different ending. So sad this judicial system obviously not written for us continuously fails us and we as a people sit idly by and allow

them to close their doors on us and laugh at us.”

Police investigating police in Quebec has rarely led to charges. The Quebec government should have responded by holding an independent provincial judicial inquiry to determine the truth. If Quebec Aboriginal Affairs Minister Geoff Kelly accepts the results of this investigation without calling for an inquiry, he should resign for refusing to honour the mandate of the ministry he assumed.

“If those were non-Native women making these accusations, it would be a different ending.”



Strikeout

by Lyle Stewart

Val-d’Or crisis flames anew as prosecutors decline to bring charges against SQ officers

A dozen Indigenous women behind the allegations of police abuse in Val-d’Or were attending a retreat at a nearby cultural centre on November 15 to prepare for an announcement on whether charges would be brought against their abusers. They were participating in healing ceremonies and receiving psychological support to prepare for individual meetings with prosecutors later in the week.

Then the facilitator of the event, Val-d’Or Native Friendship Centre Director Édith Cloutier, received a text from a journalist with the French-language TVA network. There would be no charges, it read. And this, from a source within the Surêté du Québec.

“It was difficult, a really bitter disappointment,” Cloutier recounted during an interview at her Val-d’Or office November 18, the morning before prosecutors formally announced that none of the 35 complaints coming from Val-d’Or – where six SQ officers were suspended with pay during a year-long investigation – would bring criminal charges (though they did announce that two cases dating from the 1980s and 1990s in Schefferville have led to charges of sexual assault against two former police officers there).

Cloutier had just returned from a briefing given by Quebec crown prosecutors to explain the decision to community leaders – among them, the Friendship Centre, the Cree Nation Government, Quebec Native Women and the Val-d’Or city council. She says tension is once again mounting in Val-d’Or, where many people want the attention to go away and say they support the police.



But for the women who chose to speak out, Cloutier says, the week was a bitter disappointment.

“It was very difficult to mobilize these women because of all the difficult challenges – alcoholism, homelessness, an accumulation of ruptures in their lives, including breaks with both family and community,” she related. “They had to struggle to come forward to testify. They had been building up hope in that process over the past year. They accepted to go through it in good faith even though they knew it was a process in which police were investigating police. And then, finally, only to be let down.”

The previous day, on November 17, a dozen of the women who made allegations gave a press conference at the Friendship Centre. In a joint declaration, they explained how, 18 months ago, they decided to “forget about fear, to break the silence” by coming forward in a documentary by Radio-Canada journalist Josée Dupuis for the program *Enquête*.

“We had been, for many years, victims of intimidation, abuse of power, and sexual and physical abuse by SQ officers in Val-d’Or. We made these denunciations for our friend Cindy and the Ruperhouse family with the hope that she would be found, but also to put an end to police violence against Aboriginal women,” read the declaration.

“Today, we must admit that this is not the case. And this raises deep and conflicting feelings in us: rage, discouragement, fear of being judged and treated as liars. We feel betrayed, humiliated and our hearts are broken in pieces. It is as if in this country’s justice system, we were not important, we were left behind and we have not been heard. And above all, that fear will continue to haunt us: fear of the return of the suspended police officers, fear of reprisals, fear for our own security.”

Prosecutors on the stand

In a rare step, the four crown prosecutors with the responsibility to examine the allegations gave a press

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conference November 18 to explain the decision to forego criminal charges against the six suspended officers at the local SQ detachment. Held in courtroom 160 of the Val-d'Or Palais de Justice, drums could be heard from a demonstration outside the building to support the victims.

They gave a very careful, legalistic portrait of the decisions, repeatedly insisting on the need to be able to present a case that could bring a guilty

verdict beyond any reasonable doubt. None of the Val-d'Or complaints met this standard, they explained.

None of the cases offered physical evidence; the reliability of presumed victims was often in doubt; identification of the perpetrators sometimes couldn't be made with certainty. In one case, the officer subject to a complaint had since died.

"We are conscious of the disappointment in this case, and we under-

stand their disappointment," commented prosecutor Alexandre Dalmau. "But the degree of proof required to bring charges was too high."

Prosecutor Sylvain Petitclerc said they need a more demanding level of proof in sexual assault cases – a level above a judgment that an offense "probably" occurred. "We must not accede to media or public pressure," Petitclerc added. "But this does not mean that an event described in these complaints did not occur."

Prosecutor Nadine Haviernick noted there are other avenues for the complainants, however. The Montreal police investigators suggested victims could take their cases to a police ethics board. "But we as criminal prosecutors can only examine possible criminal charges."

And that, the four prosecutors emphasized, limited their possible choices. As Dalmau reiterated, "That doesn't mean that an event didn't take place. But we are not a commission

that looks to produce the absolute truth."

A choice for the government

The protestors outside the courthouse wouldn't settle for anything less than a full airing of the truth. As the president of Femmes Autochtones du Québec, Viviane Michel, told the crowd, "We will not abandon our women. We will continue the struggle. We will build our movement. And for the truth, we need an independent and transparent inquiry."

Earlier in the week, Cree Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come told *the Nation* that the fact that the investigations have not led to any charges makes it more important than ever "to expose and to eradicate a pattern of abuse and systemic racism uncovered by the investigations, not only in Val-d'Or, but across Quebec, as more cases come to light."

"It is important that we continue to provide support to the Indigenous women who bravely spoke out against abuse and systemic racism within police forces," Coon Come added. "At this moment, I imagine that they feel that the justice system has let them down. We will therefore continue to call upon the Quebec government to launch an independent provincial judicial inquiry into the examination of police misconduct towards Indigenous women."

It's a statement that was echoed by the chief of the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador, Ghislain Picard, outside the courthouse. "There are many questions that don't have answers. The only way we are going to get answers is with a judicial inquiry."

Systemic racism

The independent observer appointed to oversee the process, Fannie Lafontaine, issued a report the same week praising the "fair and impartial" investigation of the Montreal police officers sent to look into the widespread allegations of sexual abuse, physical assault and the use of "starlight tours" to punish mar-

ginalized Native women and a handful of men in Val-d'Or.

But Lafontaine identified a need to help victims negotiate their way through the justice system, and especially how to clarify future complaints. She recommended an information campaign to help raise awareness in this regard. She also called for better police training and adequate Native representation in police forces.

But it's her last recommendation that is causing trouble for the Quebec government. Lafontaine identified "a need to shed light on the underlying causes of the present allegations of sexual abuse and abuse of power against police officers and the potential existence of discriminatory behaviour towards Aboriginal peoples, particularly Indigenous women, which suggests the existence of systemic racism among security forces against Aboriginal people."

Quebec politicians raced to drop the ball on how to shed light on the "systemic racism" Lafontaine points to.

According to a Radio-Canada report seeking a response to Lafontaine's assertion, Aboriginal Affairs Minister Geoff Kelley refused to acknowledge the existence of systemic racism in Quebec police forces. He also said the national inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women would be sufficient to help Native communities regain confidence in police forces.

Nor did spokespersons for the Parti Québécois and the Coalition Avenir Québec recognize a problem with racism toward First Nations people in the province. In the National Assembly, only the small left-wing party Québec Solidaire supported the idea of a provincial inquiry.

Tension building

Meanwhile, in Val-d'Or, the unease between communities is palpable. Signs are starting to appear around town supporting the SQ. Arguments on the street over the issue can be heard. And the SQ detachment itself is fanning the flames.



Local officers have taken to wearing special wristbands to symbolize their solidarity against their accusers. As Édith Cloutier notes, officers have even showed up at Willie's Place, a drop-in centre for homeless Native people, wearing the bands along with their police uniforms.

"It's a political statement that demonstrates how the system didn't get it," Cloutier said. "Why don't their superiors better manage their staff and ethics? The police now want to be seen as the victims. They are trying to get public opinion on their side, saying they have been unfairly suspended for a year. And now that no charges are coming forward, that everything was a lie. We understand that the general public will see this as the police won and we lost."

Meanwhile, she says, there have been more incidents. "There are new reports of starlight tours. Others state they are victims of police abuse, physical abuse. But now they are going to be more reluctant than ever to come forward."

The only option for Quebec is a focused, independent inquiry, Cloutier insists. "But for this we need political mobilization. We need it from First Nations leadership, yes, but we also need Québécois people to join us in solidarity. We all need to ask ourselves: what kind of society do we want to live in? A society of inequality?"



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Opitciwan to ban drug offenders

On November 16 in a referendum organized by the Conseil des Atikamekw d'Opitciwan, the Opitciwan population voted in favour of an administrative regulation that would see drug traffickers and dealers who are convicted of drug-related offences expelled from the community. Of the 449 people who participated in the referendum, 378 (81%) voted for the new law which aims to eliminate the distribution and consumption of drugs in Opitciwan territory.

"The result is clear and the reaction was eloquently expressed," said Chief Christian Awashish. "Many people expressed their support [of the motion] saying that quality of life and the health of our youth are the big winners here."

In a press release, Opitciwan officials said that banning repeat drug offenders will allow authorities to concentrate their efforts on more fruitful support projects that will address important social issues, and seek to make a real difference for those living in the community.

"Members spoke with their heart, and showed beyond any doubt that it was necessary to act immediately," continued Chief Awashish. "For many of our [community] members, taking drugs is suicide. The people asked us to take dissuasive measures and that's what we're doing."

"Facing a plague that spread all the way to children in primary school, we had the obligation to react and to assume responsibility," Awashish concluded.

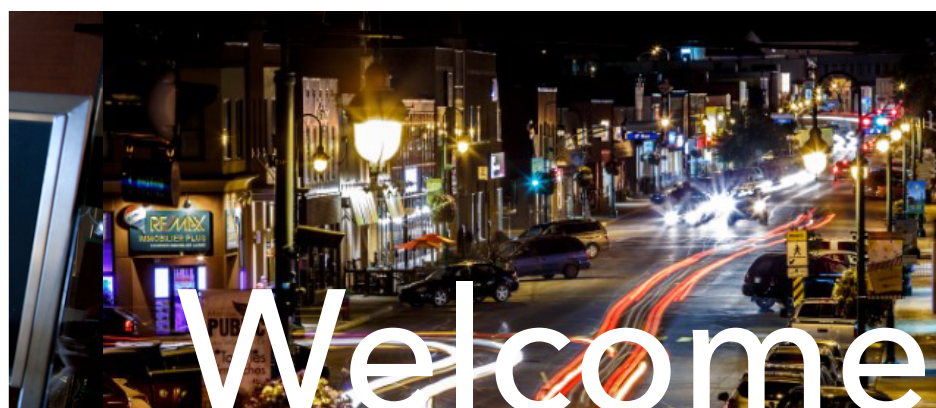
Quebec's Ministry of Forests, Wildlife and Parks working on black bear census

Since 2012, le Ministère des Forêts de la Faune et des Parcs du Québec (MFFP) has been tracking black bears in the forests of Quebec in an effort to estimate their numbers throughout the province. The study is scheduled to be concluded by 2023 and targets the Outaouais, Mauricie, Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean and Gaspésie regions. Its goal is to allow the government to better accommodate trappers and hunters, adjusting quotas based on the statistics collected, and ultimately manage and control the bear population.

Due to their discreet nature, aerial survey methods used to count animals like caribou and deer are not possible with the black bear. Using a capture-tag-and-recapture method that follows a bear's movement via radio

collars and lifting fur from strategically placed barbed-wire installations near scented lures, Quebec biologists have been tracking black bears in the wild and analyzing their DNA to determine how many bears pass through certain areas in order to approximate the province's total population.

Recently, the MFFP visited hibernating females in their den just a couple weeks after this year's birthing season. The resulting photos are both heartwarming and awe-inspiring, showing the size and strength of adult females and the beauty of young cubs' first encounters with the great outdoors. For more information on the study you can visit pleinderessources.gouv.qc.ca and search "Pleins feux sur... la recherche et l'ours noir" (French only).



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Gord Downie, Daisy Munroe, Pearl Achneepineskum, Gord Downie and Mike Downie address the crowd at WE Day Ottawa at the Canadian Tire Centre on November 9, 2016. Photo Credit: Patrick Doyle/Canadian Press

ME to WE

Indigenous issues
take centre stage as
**Ottawa celebrates
WE Day**

by Dan Isaac

WE Day Ottawa was a star-studded affair that saw Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and two Juno Award-winning acts take the stage. But first, an Elder welcomed the 16,000-strong crowd at the Canadian Tire Centre to the unceded territory of the Algonquin Nation with a prayer.

ME to WE is a global movement that empowers young people to become change-making leaders through volunteerism. Over the past 20 years, it has evolved from an organization called Free the Children (an initiative aimed at ending child labour) to the WE organization. Today it has countless youth initiatives domestically and internationally aimed at creating a better future for everyone.

In his speech, Trudeau echoed the sentiment for the necessity of youth leadership. "When people tell you that you're the leaders of tomorrow, I want you to disagree with them," Trudeau told the

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CIBC will be hosting a community meeting to answer any questions and discuss alternative banking options as a result of the CIBC Chisasibi Banking Centre closure. The meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 6, 2016 from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm. The meeting will be convened at the Mitchuap Centre, 11 Maamuu Meskino, Chisasibi, QC J0M 1E0

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“Don’t you think it’s time we built a country based on 12,000 years of Indigenous culture and beauty?”
Gord Downie -

crowd. “You are the leaders of today!”

The WE Day events celebrate the accomplishment of participants in WE initiatives, and the organization boasts that tickets to the events “can’t be bought, they must be earned.” This year, a large group of Cree youth was in attendance, including Kevin Rabbitskin who was honoured for winning the Governor General’s Award for Volunteerism a day earlier. The kids earned their tickets through their participation in the WE Take Action Summer Camps.

Musical acts such as Serena Ryder, Hedley and hip-hop artist Classified wowed the crowd. Speakers included Rick “Man in Motion” Hansen, who

spoke on inspiring through action; legally blind photographer Hani Al Moulia, who shared his experience of living in a Syrian refugee camp and emigrating to Canada; and Trudeau’s mother Margaret, who gave a light-hearted speech on mental health and her struggles with bipolar disorder.

“In one of my manic episodes I even ran off with the Rolling Stones,” she told the crowd. “Zero regrets.”

The event included several Indigenous speakers, including actor-singer Tom Jackson. He delivered a spoken-word piece that started with an anecdote: “If this is your first time hearing me speak, this will be news to you, but I love you. And I have a brother in Winnipeg named Bernie, and he told me, ‘If you’re going tell them you love them, tell them I love them too.’ So Bernie loves you too.”

The Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund addressed the issues surrounding residential schools. “If you haven’t seen The Secret Path, please watch it, talk about it, talk about residential schools and what each one of us can do, and then let’s get to work,” said TV director Mike Downie, brother of Tragically Hip frontman Gord Downie. “Don’t you think it’s time we built a country based on 12,000 years of Indigenous culture and beauty?”

Pearl and Daisy Wenjack, sisters of the boy whose tragic story is told in The Secret Path, then joined Mike and Gord Downie on stage. The sisters shared an emotional, traditional song based on the Medicine Wheel.

“The song has four choruses, it covers all the colours of people – black, white, yellow and red. Make friends with these people. You will

find they are like you,” said Pearl Wenjack.

Besides the event, the WE organization also tries to do its part to build a dialogue around Indigenous issues in Canada. The WE Stand Together Initiative aims to strengthen ties between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians through learning and dialogue.

The Indigenous content, speakers and segments seen throughout WE Day is the rule, not the exception. “We always make sure to include lots of Indigenous content and speakers, no matter what city the event is taking place in,” said Annie Ethier, the director of Free the Children Montreal and Ottawa. “We want to share culture and values and challenge people to open up a dialogue and collaborate on issues.”

Cree teen receives Governor General’s award for volunteerism

by Dan Isaac



Kevin Rabbitskin, a 14-year-old from Mistissini, received the Governor General’s Caring Canadian Award for Volunteerism during a ceremony November 8 in Ottawa. The event was hosted by the ME to WE organization as a prelude to WE Day Ottawa, an event that took place the following day at Canadian Tire Place.

Rabbitskin won the award with nine other outstanding young people involved in the ME to WE organization and their respective communities. In a serendipitous moment just before Rabbitskin made

the walk across the stage to receive his award, Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde ascended the escalator behind the ceremony.

It is the first time the award has recognized an Indigenous youth in the region, according to Annie Ethier, director of Free the Children Montreal and Ottawa.

Rabbitskin’s nomination followed his participation in the We Take Action summer camps, an initiative that brings young people together from every background to explore global and local issues and build leadership skills. This

past summer, there were 45 Cree participants, marking the fifth time youth from Eeyou Istchee have attended the camps.

“Rabbitskin displayed exemplary leadership skills by bringing kids from different cultural backgrounds together to collaborate on activities,” Ethier explained. “And once he was back in his community, Kevin continued to use the leadership skills he learned at the camps to bring people together around Cree culture.”

Rabbitskin says he will continue both his community work and activities with the WE organization. “I was real-

ly surprised that I won the award,” said Rabbitskin. “I felt happy, excited and proud. It was a lot of fun.”

“We are proud that the Governor General of Canada has recognized a Cree youth with this prestigious award for people who make a difference in their communities and their nation,” said Cree Nation Government Justice Director Donald Nicholls. “We hope that more youth will become involved in activities that improve the lives of people around them, and in the world community as well.”



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25 CLOSED MERRY CHRISTMAS JOYEUX NOEL	26 CLOSED MERRY CHRISTMAS JOYEUX NOEL	29 ADM. PACKS \$7 REGULARS \$350 FULL CARD \$3000	30 2 for 1 Admission WIZARD of OZ LION JACKPOT will PAY	31 CLOSED HAPPY NEW YEAR Re-Open January 5 Free Admission
DECEMBER 10th PENNY FAIR BINGO REG. GAMES \$500..FULL CARD JACKPOT \$5,000 DECEMBER 15: THE TIN MAN ~ CURRENT JACKPOT is OVER \$12,500 and it will be won on that NIGHT		Management reserves the right to change/modify program without notice. La direction reserve le droit de changer la programmation sans preavis.		



Mapping the learning path

by Joel Barde

The Cree School Board's second regional general assembly, held November 8-9, in Mistissini, brought together school board officials and representatives from all ten Cree communities to map the event's theme – "Our Journey Towards Student Success" – and determine the best way to improve educational outcomes for Cree students.

To kick off the event, Cree School Board Director General Abraham Jolly presented the board's 2016-2021 Strategic Action Plan. Based upon a comprehensive review of the board's previous five-year action plan, which expired in 2015 – and a recent survey of Cree on the state of education in Eeyou Istchee – the plan sets out strategic goals for student success and yearly progress expectations.

After the plan was presented to the audience, representatives from each Cree community, including chiefs, health board officials, school administrator and students, developed calls to action for their communities and respective schools

"If we want to achieve strategic success, we have to do it together as a nation," said Nian Matoush, communications director for the Cree School Board. "We want to hear from the schools and communities on how we can achieve student success."

Matoush added that community engagement could be used to combat absenteeism – a perennial problem for the school board.

Over the past several years, the CSB has adopted a progressive approach to improving student outcomes, including employing the latest findings in neuroscience. And last year, it teamed up with the Martin Aboriginal Education Initiative, which had developed a course on First Nations entrepreneurship that is being offered by Mistissini's Voyageur Memorial High School for the second consecutive year.

Former Prime Minister Paul Martin, who will be visiting Mistissini on November 25 for its official launch, founded the foundation. "It's a great honour," Matoush said of the visit. "It will resonate most with the students.

He's going to get their feedback and hear what they're doing."

Officials also updated the attendees on ongoing changes to the 1978 Cree School Board Act. Two working groups are currently developing a framework for the Act, which Abraham Jolly says is an important part of Cree self-determination. he hopes the project will be ready by December, but acknowledges it could take longer. "The next time we have the assembly, we'd like it to be complete."

Excited about what the next five years have to offer, Jolly stressed the need to implement the objectives and monitor progress. "The key part will be making sure our students are learning at the levels they should."

In addition to the school board leaders, attendees heard from a host of special guests, including Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come, Philip Awashish, Abel Bosum and Robert Kanatewat. And, for some needed comic relief, Cree comedian Don Burnstick from Alexander First Nation, outside of Edmonton also performed a set.

Showing Solidarity ■ ■



Montrealers organize multiple events to show support for Standing Rock

by Lyle Stewart



Follow the money. That's the message activists who oppose construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline through the Standing Rock Sioux reservation have for international sympathizers of the growing protest movement.

In Canada, that means targeting the three large banks here that are among the 17 directly funding the project by Energy Transfer Partners to build a crude oil pipeline from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. They are urging Canadians to challenge the Royal Bank of

Canada, Scotiabank and TD Securities over the heavily militarized response to the Standing Rock Sioux, including attack dogs, sound-cannons, heavily armed officers, and even a plane spraying undetermined chemicals over the protest camp in North Dakota.

This was the message delivered at a mobilization teach-in at Concordia University November 10 by students from the university's First Peoples Studies program.

According to Hugh MacMillan, a senior

researcher with the group Food & Water Watch, "People should ask these institutions why they are sinking so much money into maximizing the amounts of oil and gas that can be brought to the surface and burned at a time when climate science is clear we have to maximize what we keep in the ground instead."

The Washington, D.C.-based organization suggests the following as a model message for the banks: "As a customer of your financial institution, I reject the notion of my money helping to sup-

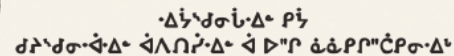
port your investment in the Dakota Access pipeline, an inherently dangerous and unjust oil pipeline that threatens air and water quality in many states, and violates sacred lands of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe. I urge you to give up your financial stake in the Dakota Access pipeline immediately."

The event was one of several in the Montreal area to show solidarity with the water protectors trying to stop the DAPL at Standing Rock. On November 15, a group of activists in Montreal's St-Henri and

Pointe St-Charles neighbourhoods blocked train tracks in response to a call to action made by Indigenous leaders at Standing Rock to take to the streets and disrupt "business-as-usual."

In a written statement, the blockaders noted the city is itself on unceded Mohawk lands. "With the lives of communities and the natural world in danger from large petroleum companies and the banks that support them, resistance against these destructive projects has become necessary around the world, including





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by Suzann Méthot, COMEX Chairperson,
& Brian Craik, COMEX member

COMEX LOOKING FOR YOUR INPUT

Chapter 22 of the JBNQA establishes independent, permanent, active committees where representatives from Quebec, Canada and the Cree Nation ensure that Cree environmental, social and harvesting rights are protected. Operating now for almost four decades, it's important to continue to share our views on the process.

Section 22 of the James Bay Agreement created the Evaluation Committee (COMEV) to screen project proposals and to provide directives - questions for those who propose projects that must be reviewed. There is also a James Bay Advisory Committee that, among other things, reviews and oversees the operation of the Environmental and Social Protection regime set out in Section 22 of the JBNQA.

Once the proponent of a project provides an impact statement report, the documents are sent to the Environmental and Social Impact Review Committee (COMEX). Our independent committee is formed of three members appointed by Quebec and two by the Cree Nation Government. We examine projects under provincial jurisdiction or within category I territory. There is also a Federal Review Committee called COFEX for matters under Federal jurisdiction.

COMEX will soon be holding its 350th meeting. In light of this, we're asking ourselves what improvements we can bring to the process. Having heard from individuals, communities and groups over the years and having made modifications to the procedures, we realize that it is important that we continue to exchange views with the Cree and the James Bay population. This process requires us to continue sharing our points of view in order to inform those just learning about the process and also to promote understanding of our respective roles and expectations. We would love to hear from people who want more information about COMEX and what we do.

Section 22 can be a difficult process to understand, even for those who use and interpret it every day. With its four committees: JBACE, COMEV, COMEX, COFEX, it's no surprise that some people are curious as to what these committees do. Even within these committees things are not always crystal clear! Aside from occasional difficulties understanding the roles of the different committees, the lack of necessary available popularized scientific materials for distribution also raises concerns.

COMEX has identified a series of actions we will pursue to solve these problems. More comprehensible information must be made accessible to

the people. In addition, COMEX will increase its presence within the territory to become more familiar with the people and their culture. Recently COMEX held its 346th meeting in Waskaganish. It was our privilege to meet with some of the members of the community and to share in the festivities surrounding the annual fishing for ciscoes. It was also important for the members of COMEX to see that the remedial measures of the Rupert River EMIA Project have resulted in the river continuing to provide for the people of Waskaganish.

To learn more about our intentions, the COMEX 2016-2017 action plan for better public participation can be found on our website: comexqc.ca.

While there are not many new projects presently proposed in Eeyou Istchee, the projects that are under review will have impacts on the land and its people. Whoever is concerned about development and its impacts and benefits, please take some time to visit the COMEX website. Don't hesitate to send us questions, comments or proposals.

The more we share our knowledge and concerns, the better we will understand one another and the more we will appreciate the risks and benefits of development.



'Tis the Season

Holiday shopping with *the Nation*

by Joshua Grant

It's the time of year we brace ourselves for constant Christmas music and holiday decorations. Whether you're celebrating the birth of Jesus, some well-needed time off work, fresh-air activities like snowmobiling and snowshoeing or just enjoying quality time indoors with family and friends, the winter holidays should be a fun and festive time for everyone.

Share the love, spread the cheer and be sure to buy your gifts sooner rather than later to avoid the long line-ups and shopping madness that will inevitably take over by mid-December. Here are some gift ideas we've put together for our annual Christmas guide to help you spoil and surprise the people you love.

Nunavik Creations' stunning parkas, mittens and moccasins set the standard for quality craftsmanship and authentic design of traditional Inuit outdoor wear and accessories. The Akulik and Akukittuq Amauti parka models for women come with a large hood designed to carry babies and have received rave reviews for their comfort and warmth (not to mention their stylish appearance) and go for \$1499 and \$1699 respectively. Different parkas range from \$999 to \$4879 and come in fabric or sealskin and fox. A men's sealskin parka will cost you a cool \$5000, but leather slippers are available for guys and girls at a reasonable \$189.99.

With comparable products for both sexes and a children's line coming soon, Nunavik Creations' other products include sealskin mitts that go for \$219 to \$349, legwarmers for \$539, sealskin hats for \$599, crocheted hats for \$149 and an assortment of sealskin, fur and leather wallets, purses and handbags anywhere from \$49 to \$1149. If you're ever in Montreal, you can check out some of Nunavik Creations' products at the Ashukan Cultural Centre. Otherwise you can browse their online store at nunavik-creations.com

Nunavik Creations



Manitobah Mukluks



"The original winter boot of North America: created with natural materials and thousands of years of functionality and culture." Not much more needs to be said about Manitobah Mukluks, a First Nations-owned company that creates traditional, sturdy, waterproof, fashionable footwear of all shapes and sizes for men, women and young ones. Moccasins and mukluks are available at very reasonable prices, costing from \$69.99 for basic moccasins to \$349.99 for top-of-the-line full-length mukluks. Shop online at manitobah.ca

For affordable Indigenous fashion coming out of Kahnawake, Tammy Beauvais Designs makes beautiful floral and feather print dresses, skirts, ponchos, shrugs, scarves, scrunchies, purses and other accessories for women that cost between \$40 and \$85. In the men's section are combination floral print and beadwork formal wear, Eagle feather vests, ties, embroidered dress shirts, beaded coats and casual wear. Ties go for \$45, dress shirts for \$60, vests for \$180 and coats for \$750 to \$1000. Check out tammybeauvais.com to shop online.

Tammy Beauvais Designs





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Comité d'examen des répercussions
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6-75-44Ud C^a L^a
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417



COMEX is the Environmental and Social Impact Review Committee, established by chapter 22 of the James Bay and Northern Quebec agreement.

Its mission is to review the environmental and social impacts of proposed development projects and make recommendations to the provincial and regional administrator of the Convention.

COMEX heard your concerns regarding consultations made by proponents and our public hearings . See our new "Action plan" on public participation and our "Expectations"

by visiting our WEB site at

www.comexqc.ca

or follow us on Twitter and Facebook.



Tim **Whiskeychan**



Waskaganish's Tim Whiskeychan says he's available on call for members of his community and beyond who would like to commission a painting. Whiskeychan works mainly with acrylic and canvas in an abstract style. You can reach him at 819-354-1846.

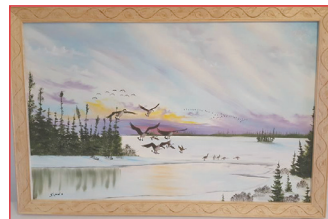
Paula **Menarick**



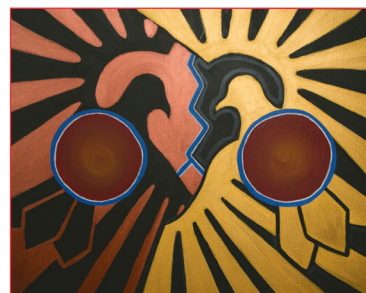
Currently based out of Chisasibi and Oujé-Bougoumou, Paula Menarick shares her passion for her Cree and Inuit heritage by creating traditional crafts like beaded earrings, sealskin and moosehide mittens, embroidered canvas bags, cartridge bags, beaded sandals, beaded flowers and more. She says people are welcome to see what she has available on her Facebook page Paula Menarick: Fast Cloud Inspirations. Keep an eye out for her online auctions and beautiful craftwork!



James Loon



Since 2011 James Loon has been making oil paintings in Mistissini, a craft that he describes as a "passion" and a "stress relief". Depicting scenic landscapes, wildlife and all kinds of different outdoor settings, his work is gorgeous and intricate. Those interested in viewing his work can visit his Facebook page [James Loon Oil Paintings](#). If you'd like to commission or purchase a painting you can reach him at 418 770-4125 or james-loon71@hotmail.com.



Natasia, Saige & Jade **Mukash**

Natasia Mukash
and her daughters
Saige and Jade are
proof that talent and
passion for the arts
can be passed on
through generations.

The hard-working Natasia, of Cree and Abenaki descent, says her artwork is based on the spirit of her culture and her people. She is a full-time visual artist who sells prints, canvases, tapestries, stationery and all kinds of accessories featuring traditionally inspired imagery. Her daughters have followed in her footsteps, pursuing their love for visual art, branching out and exploring different styles and forms to create in ways that are uniquely their own.

You can find the Mukash family's artwork on Facebook (Natasia Mukash Visual Artist, Saige Mukash Artwork), shop online ([society6.com/natasiemukash](https://www.society6.com/natasiemukash) and [society6.com/saigemukash](https://www.society6.com/saigemukash)) or e-mail [natasiemukash](mailto:natasiemukash@gmail.com) and mukashsaige@gmail.com. Selections of Jade's art can be found in the Whapmagoostui/Kuujuaraapik Sell, Trade and Donations group on Facebook.

Artwork by Jade (left) and Natasia Mukash (right)



Friendly tip:
the PS4 500 GB
offers an
NHL 17 bundle



PS4 & Xbox One

Playstation and Microsoft have spent a few years honing their latest consoles, releasing the Playstation 4 Pro and the Xbox One S, both of which now offer over a terabyte of storage, 4K video streaming, the option of purchasing a complementary Virtual Reality system and in Microsoft's case, Ultra High Definition (UHD) Blu-ray playback.

According to reviews the Xbox is centred on 4K video content while the PS4 focuses on delivering the best all-around visual experience and processing speed for gaming. Both systems offer exclusive games – Halo, Gears of War and the Forza racing series for Xbox, the Uncharted series, Ratchet and Clank remakes and a few Final Fantasy games for Playstation. As the two consoles compete for their share of the video game market both console game bundles come in at similar retail prices. At Bestbuy in store or online the PS4/Xbox One 500 GB bundle will set you back \$379.99 and the PS4 Pro/Xbox One S 1 TB or 2 TB cost \$449.99 and \$499.99 respectively. Check out bestbuy.ca

iPhone 7 & 7+

Apple's controversial new smartphone recently hit the market, boasting cutting edge hardware, stereo speakers, an improved camera system and a waterproof shell. All that's missing is the headphone jack. Apple's latest cellphone comes with the now standard lightning to USB cable and power adapter but the popular apple earbuds are now equipped with a lightning connector rather than a 3.5 mm audio jack (presumably to keep the phone water-resistant). As Apple finishes production on their fancy wireless ear pods, audiophiles craving the latest iPhone will have to make use of the added lightning to 3.5 mm adapter if they want to use their own headphones. That being said, the new iPhone 7 or 7+ is a sure holiday hit for the diehard Apple fans and tech savvy consumers in your life. Starting at \$799 without a cell phone contract, it comes with a 12 megapixel camera, HD and 4k video, 4.7 or 5.5" retina HD display and 32, 128 or 256 GB of storage depending on your price point. apple.com/ca/iphone-7



Artlab for kids

Susan Schwake's paperback art book promises "52 creative adventures in drawing, painting, printmaking, paper and mixed media for budding artists of all ages" for just under \$30. If your children have expressed an interest in visual arts, here's a way to encourage their creativity and try their hand producing their own art.



LiteHawk drones



Also available in Best Buy stores or online shop are the LiteHawk Quattro Click Mini and the Quattro Snap Quadcopter drones. Both come equipped with a camera, microSD card, USB reader and rechargeable batteries. You will need to pick up AA batteries for the remote controllers however. Costing \$69.99 for the mini and \$99.99 for the Quattro Snap these are fun gift ideas for kids in their early to mid-teens.

Alongside of Tammy Beauvais' fashion line and accessories is her popular children's game Pow-wow-opoly. "Go to grand entry and collect money every time. Get yourself an Indian taco or some duct tape for your moccasins. Pick up some items for your regalia to get ready to dance in a men's or women's traditional dance," says the game description on Beauvais' site. A fun way to teach your kids some math and language skills as well as the ins and outs of the powwow tradition, the game cost \$38.00 and can be ordered from tammybeauvais.com.



Powowopoly

Zipfy sled

Zipfy's Freestyle Mini Luge snow sled is lightweight, compact and durable, making it easy for kids to carry back to the top of the hill. Its unique design allows for more control by steering with your body and makes it easy for kids to slow down or stop by simply lowering their legs down into the snow. Also available on amazon.ca, the Zipfy sled comes in a variety of colours and sizes according to preference and size and retails at around \$60. See zipfy.com for more info.



Cuisinart MSC electric fondue pot



Also made by Cuisinart is an electric fondue pot that comes complete with a base, temperature probe, 8 prongs and a fork rack. Heat up chocolate, cheese, broth or oil and have a few friends over to dip and enjoy or just prepare a fun meal for your family. \$104.57, also available on amazon.ca.

Cuisinart MSC slow cooker series



Cuisinart's MSC series comes in three versions: the MSC-400, 600 and 800, bringing four quart (just under 4L), six quart and seven quart cooking convenience to your kitchen. The MSC-400 and 600 models are 3-in-1 stainless steel cookers that promise to sauté, steam or slow cook your favourite recipes. The larger 800 model offers the same convenience with an additional roast option and the ability to switch between cooking modes at the touch of a button.

All three models feature convenient and easy to use LCD displays to set time and temperature and include a steaming rack while the 6- and 7-quart options have dishwasher safe removable parts and removable non-stick aluminum cast pots. Goose, moose, caribou, fish, all kinds of wild game can be slowly cooked to perfection in this fine piece of equipment and as an added bonus Amazon says it ships in "frustration free packaging". The Cuisinart MSC-400, 600 and 800 are available on amazon.ca for \$86.67, \$143.42 and \$186.20 respectively.

Oil-free fryers



Here's a great way to enjoy the same taste of your favourite greasy foods without any of the grease! Molla, Philips, T-Fal and Big Boss all manufacture oil-free fryers that use a combination of infrared and convection technology to evenly "fry" things like french fries, onion rings and hot wings. Each fryer is closed in to avoid any mess and has adjustable temperature control that can reach up to 400F to make sure your food is cooked right. The perfect addition to the kitchen to enjoy guilt-free comfort food and avoid clogging your arteries, these kitchen products range from \$89.99 to \$250 depending on the size and quality of the model. Search air fryer on amazon.ca.

Sports Experts & Atmosphere Val-d'Or



Hunting, fishing, boating, camping and outdoor clothing – Cabela's has got you covered when it comes to Christmas shopping for the avid outdoors person. Currently offered on their website are savings of \$100 on the Remington Model 783 bolt-action rifle with scope, \$50 off the Nikon Buckmaster II Riflescope, \$120 off the

Garmin Rino GPS/Radio and up to 50% off insulated outerwear. If you're able to travel to Ottawa or will be in the area for business, be sure to check out the recently opened, massive 70,000-square-foot Cabela's store at 3065 Palladium Drive (near the Tanger Outlets). To shop online visit cabelas.ca

Cabela's



By the end of November, Val-d'Or's Sports Experts store in the Carrefour Nord-Ouest is scheduled to complete their renovations, expanding to 20,750 square feet and adding an Atmosphere Outdoors boutique. As the store makes room for the Atmosphere expansion and new stock, there are all kinds of sales on winter gear, clothing and sports equipment. The shopper can also look forward to the arrival of new products for year-round outdoor activities. Whether you're looking for new hockey gear, running shoes, hiking boots, winter coats and snow pants, camping supplies or anything fitness-related, you'll be able to find it here.



Nike N7 Spirit of Protection Collection



Inspired by professional lacrosse player Lyle Thompson, from the Onandaga Nation of New York, Nike launched a collection of First-Nations-themed shoes and athletic wear this November. The Spirit of Protection Collection features a hawk feather representing Thompson's Onandaga clan as well as the turquoise of Nike's N7 initiative to "inspire and enable Native American and Aboriginal youth to participate in sport and physical activity." The line is specifically designed to shield athletes from the challenges of winter.

Footwear in the collection includes the men's Air Jordan 31, Nike Pegasus 89, the Air Force Ultra Low and the women's Pegasus 89 and Nike AF Upstep Warrior. Also available are a men's hypermesh basketball jacket, drywear hoodie, ¾ training tights, t-shirt and basketball shorts as well as a t-shirt, sports pants and ½ zip poncho for the gals.





HARDY
ORGANIC VSOP COGNAC
COUNTRY: France
SAQ PRICE: \$77.00

TASTE:
In the past few years we've seen organic wines making a strong appearance along with vodkas. It was time cognac joined the group and they've done a decent job of it. The taste is smoother than I expected and the beading is exquisite. The aftertaste is smooth which doesn't always happen with cognacs. A fine choice to share some holiday cheer with friends or a special gift for your boss. No, I'm not hinting but...



COLLINGWOOD
CANADIAN WHISKEY
COUNTRY: Canada
SAQ PRICE: \$34.75

TASTE:
A sweet breath of Canada. This hometown whiskey gives Canadian Club a run for its money and market. A good addition to any home.



JACK DANIELS
TENNESSEE FIRE
COUNTRY: USA
SAQ PRICE: \$32.50

TASTE:
Hoping to warm up quickly after a day out snowmobiling, snowshoeing or building that outdoor rink for the kids? Then this Jack flavoured with cinnamon will hit the spot. I'm sure a few experimenters will come up with their unique way of drinking some Tennessee Fire.



CONCHA Y TORO
MARQUES DE CASA CONCHA CABERNET SAUVIGNON
COUNTRY: Chile
COLOUR: Red
VARIETAL (TYPE OF GRAPE): Cabernet Sauvignon
SAQ PRICE: \$22.05

TASTE & PAIRING:
A delicious robust red wine full of flavour – one that would enhance any wild meat such as geese, caribou or moose. It would be great to use a cup of this for a Moose Bourguignon and serve the reminder with the meal.



LA CHABLISIENNE
CHÂTEAU GRENOUILLES CHABLIS GRAND CRU
COUNTRY: France
COLOUR: White
VARIETAL: Chardonnay
SAQ PRICE: \$98.75

TASTE & PAIRING:
A beautiful tasty white to be enjoyed with that special friend to show you care. This white hails from the Bourogne region of France. After my sip I remembered why it was one of my favourite areas to buy wine from.

WACHIYA!

by Will Nicholls

The origin of the word wachiya used by Cree in northern Quebec and Ontario is not really part of the Cree language at all. It comes from the Scottish people who lived among us. They would greet each other saying, "What cheer you?" The Cree took it and made it part of their language just as many cultures have borrowed from other peoples' languages to enrich their own. But that premise of "what cheer you" is never more evident than when the holidays arrive. Indeed "what cheer you" is what we are recommending for your choice of holiday spirits. Look at our choices and remember the holidays are a social gathering so share the cheer responsibly.



by Matthew Dessner

La Grande Degustation

There are two types of people in the world – average wine drinkers and wine connoisseurs. Montreal's La Grande Degustation, which took place from November 3rd to 5th is where the two meet. Hundreds of winemakers from around the world are itching to tell you about their products – their passions. The sheer number of options can be intimidating, so we've highlighted some of our favourites that should spice up your holiday menus.



Photos by Marie-Joe Costantine



A web service called Chacun Son Vin is looking to make it easier for you to find a wine that you'll love at the right price. The site ranks and reviews over 125,000 wines and is a forum for discussion in addition to a specialized search engine. What makes the site especially useful is that it can find the store nearest to you that stocks your favourite wine, a valuable service in the north. Just enter your postal code, price range and desired wine type, then let Chacun Son Vin do the rest. And please, drink responsibly. Wachiya!



PALADIN SYRAH

COUNTRY: Italy

COLOUR: Red

VARIETAL: Syrah

IMPORT ONLY: Avg. price: \$12

TASTE & PAIRING:

This wine has an intense flavour, spicy even at the beginning of the sip. The aftertaste of a light fruit jam is soothing to the pallet. Great with aged cheese, or following a meal.



NORTON PRIVADA

COUNTRY: Argentina

COLOUR: Red

VARIETAL: Malbec, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon

SAQ PRICE: \$23.95

TASTE & PAIRING:

Named one of top 10 wines in the region, this Malbec blend has a soft texture but is filled with flavour. Notes of blackberry and currants stand out. Great with red meats.



ALMA NEGRA "M" BLEND

COUNTRY: Argentina

COLOUR: Red

VARIETAL: Bonarda, Malbec

SAQ PRICE: \$20.10

TASTE & PAIRING:

A dense wine with a strong earthy smell. The flavours of fruits and coffee stick out. Pairs well with pastas, red meat and duck.



VINA SAN PEDRO 1865 CARMENERE

COUNTRY: Chile

COLOUR: Red

VARIETAL: Carmenere

SAQ PRICE: \$21.95

TASTE & PAIRING:

A very fruity wine with notes of paprika, pepper and chocolate. Pairs well with game birds and grilled meats.



KELLARI CANTINA TERLAN

PINOT GRIGIO

COUNTRY: Italy

COLOUR: White

VARIETAL: Pinot Grigio

SAQ PRICE: \$21.95

TASTE & PAIRING:

A light yet flavourful wine reminiscent of melon, lychee and grapefruit. Pairs well with white sauces, fish, seafood and cured meats.



VALDIVIESO CABALLO LOCO

COUNTRY: Chile

COLOUR: Red

VARIETAL: Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec, Syrah, Carmenere

IMPORT ONLY: Avg. price: \$82.00

TASTE & PAIRING:

A notably expensive and award-winning wine, each blend of Caballo Loco contains 50% of the grapes picked in the current year and 50% of all previous years of production. This dedicated aging process started as an accident at the beginning of production when the winemaker unintentionally mixed two differently aged blends. Years later, the result is a special wine, filled with flavour and fruity aromas. Pairs well with meats, cheese and desserts.

Avis de fermeture

du centre bancaire CIBC Chisasibi prévue pour le vendredi 9 juin 2017, à 13 h.

Le **centre bancaire CIBC Chisasibi**, situé sur le chemin Centre, C. P. 60 (Maamuu Meskino), Chisasibi (Québec) J0M 1E0, fermera ses portes le **vendredi 9 juin 2017, à 13 h** et déménagera au **centre bancaire CIBC Val-d'Or**, situé au 824, 3e avenue, Val-d'Or (Québec) J9P 1T1.

Si vous avez des questions ou des préoccupations concernant la fermeture de ce centre bancaire, n'hésitez pas à vous informer auprès du centre bancaire ou à nous téléphoner au 819 855-2803.

Vous êtes invité à une réunion communautaire.

La CIBC tiendra une réunion communautaire afin de répondre aux questions et discuter des autres options bancaires par suite de la fermeture du centre bancaire CIBC Chisasibi. La réunion aura lieu le mardi 6 décembre 2016, de 19 h à 21 h, au centre Mitchuap, situé au 11 Maamuu Meskino, Chisasibi (Québec) J0M 1E0.

À la Banque CIBC, nous nous efforçons de répondre à vos besoins financiers. Malgré la fermeture du centre bancaire CIBC Chisasibi le 9 juin 2017, vous pourrez faire affaire avec nous en direct, par téléphone ou au moyen d'un appareil mobile, et ce, 24 heures sur 24, 7 jours sur 7. Nous serions ravis de vous montrer comment mieux utiliser ces services pour effectuer vos opérations bancaires courantes.



Vous pouvez communiquer avec l'Agence de la consommation en matière financière du Canada (ACFC) qui a l'autorité d'exiger de la Banque CIBC qu'elle tienne une réunion officielle entre la Banque, des représentants de l'ACFC et les parties intéressées des environs du centre bancaire afin qu'ils échangent leurs points de vue concernant la fermeture du centre bancaire. L'ACFC peut demander à la Banque de tenir une telle réunion si cette dernière n'a pas suffisamment consulté la communauté de la zone touchée par la fermeture pour établir avec précision les opinions des parties intéressées en ce qui a trait à la fermeture ou si une personne ou un représentant de la communauté de la zone touchée par la fermeture demande la tenue d'une telle réunion en soumettant à l'ACFC une demande écrite qui n'est ni futile ni contrariante. Pour obtenir plus de renseignements, vous pouvez téléphoner à l'ACFC, au 1 866 461-FCAC (3222), ou visiter le site www.fcac-acfc.gc.ca.



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Odds & Ends



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Ranging from \$19.99 to \$349.99 and stuffed full of quintessential Canadian winter goods, the Gift Company's Christmas baskets have everything from truffles, dark chocolate, hot-cider and hot-chocolate toppings to fruit, olives, brie, goat cheese, gourmet flatbreads and maple-smoked salmon. There are baskets for "chocololics", foodies, cookie monsters and office parties, many of which offer different sizes (small, medium, large, XL) depending on how many people you want to surprise with some tasty Canadian treats.

Also available are handmade Inukshuks, mugs, coasters, tea towels, oven mitts and other accessories featuring Haida artwork plus calendars celebrating the Canadian landscape and Canada's favourite pastime of hockey. The Great Canadian Gift Company also has a section of environmentally friendly options with furniture, glassware, household products and gift boxes all made from recycled material – they even sell a tree planting kit! thegreatcanadiangiftcompany.com



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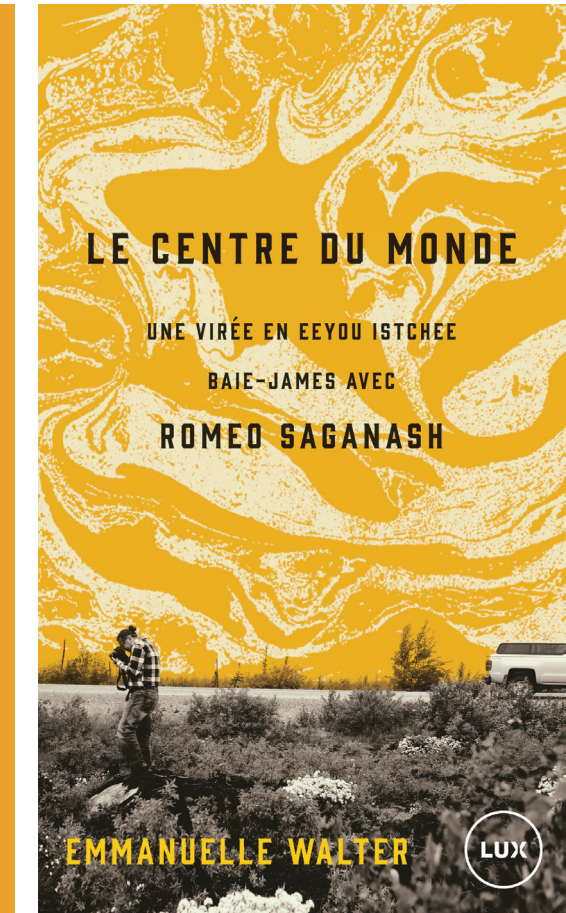
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At the centre of the world

A new book follows **Romeo Saganash** through Eeyou Istchee
by Jesse Staniforth

Following last winter's mass murder in a shooting spree in La Loche, Saskatchewan, and the continuing epidemic of suicide in Attawapiskat and other Indigenous communities, media commentators argued that isolation is to blame. The misery and despair, they said, were because these communities were far from regions where services and economic opportunities were more abundant.

Left unmentioned were the continuing effects of colonialism, residential schools, land theft or federal underfunding. This didn't sit well with Montreal journalist Emmanuelle Walter.

"I was very shocked seeing all these people writing about the isolation of communities, saying it was bad and we needed to end it – how

people needed to move to the south," explained Walter, who is originally from France but has lived in Montreal for five years. "I knew already that living in a community means a lot for the people who are there. Yes, it can be hard, and yes, young people may want to leave and see something else. But still, it's their place. When you go to Eeyou Istchee, it's stronger than that. It's more than just 'their place.' It's a country."

After publishing her book *Stolen Sisters* (*Soeurs Volées* in French), which is about missing and murdered Indigenous women in Quebec, Walter encountered Romeo Saganash and grew interested in the Cree Nation. She pitched a newspaper article about Eeyou Istchee, but her publisher suggested she instead write

it as a short book. The result is *Le centre du monde: Une virée en Eeyou Istchee Baie-James avec Romeo Saganash*, which had its official launch November 14 in Montreal with Walter and Saganash both in attendance.

Because it deals with issues in Quebec, Walter doubts that an anglophone publisher will pay to have the book translated into English. But that doesn't trouble her, she says, because it's important for Quebecers to come to terms with internal Indigenous issues. In *Le centre du monde*, Walter encourages Quebecer to take notice of Eeyou Istchee as a powerful and distinct society within Quebec.

"There's a sentence in the book where I say, 'Quebecers wanted to be decolonized, and they colonized a place,'"

The Community of Mashteuiatsh Finds New Ways to Meet Members' Housing Needs

The Pekuakamiulnuatsh Takuhikan Band Council (community of Mashteuiatsh) in Quebec has a long history of working with its members to create a vital and thriving community. Their housing sector is no exception. Over the past ten years, the Council has created a wide range of programs to meet the diverse housing needs of all its members, from homeowners and renters to those looking to build a home of their own.

Pekuakamiulnuatsh Takuhikan's homeownership and loan guarantee programs have also helped its members build around ten new homes a year.

"We have implemented housing programs that enable all individuals in the community to meet their housing needs," explains Housing Sector Manager, Lucie Germain. "Members with very low incomes benefit from affordable housing units, while those who are more

financially independent can get financial support or a loan guarantee to buy their own home or have one built."

One of the Band's most innovative ideas is a rent-to-own program, which was introduced in 2008. Under the program, members who rent a single-family house for 25 years automatically become the proud new owners of the home. In return, the tenants take on responsibility for things like replacing door knobs, locks and mailboxes.

"Maintenance of the buildings represents a significant workload for Pekuakamiulnuatsh Takuhikan," Germain says. "This allows us to free up some time to work on aging buildings and, especially, makes the tenants aware of their future responsibilities as homeowners."

Pekuakamiulnuatsh Takuhikan's homeownership and loan guarantee programs have also helped its



members build around ten new homes a year. That's a significant number for a community of 6,300 people. Plus, the Band's developer assistance program provides financial support for those who want to build houses to rent to other members. This is a win-win for the Band, as it creates both homes and new jobs.

In addition to its own initiatives, the Band also takes advantage of many of the programs offered by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). Through CMHC's On-Reserve Non-Profit Housing Program, for example, Pekuakamiulnuatsh Takuhikan has been able to develop 140 new affordable rental homes. With the support of CMHC's Home Adaptations for Seniors' Independence (HASI) program, the Band is also making it easier for Elders to stay independent and in their own homes.



Walter explained. "I realized that Quebec wanted to be free from other sources of energy – that's a good thing. They used a source of energy that's cleaner than others, and that's also a good thing. But they didn't realize that at the same time they were colonizing another place. Quebec was oppressed and dominated by the English, so Quebecers don't feel like we ourselves could be colonizers. But we are."

So Walter joined Saganash on tours of Canada's largest federal riding, representing 53% of Quebec's landmass. Aside from Cree communities, they also visited the Inuit communities of Nunavik. But Walter was spellbound by her time in Eeyou Istchee.

"I'm not stupid, I know there are problems there that we see in other Native communities as well," she said. "But still, I felt there was something extremely strong linking the people of Eeyou Istchee to the land. I also realized they were doing a lot to improve the connection between children and their culture and their language. It sounded to me like a whole world, a country, an interesting place to be. When I was there it was like changing my

centre of gravity: you feel 'I'm here, and this is the place to be. This is the centre of the world.'"

Saganash, who is fluently trilingual and spent much of the book launch speaking French, said Quebec is increasingly acknowledging the importance of the Cree Nation and the north.

"People have come to understand that every time the Cree sign an agreement with Quebec, it's good news for the Cree, and the region, and for the province of Quebec," he said. "Before they used to say that Cree were spoiled and always wanted more – that's been the reputation of the Cree for so long. But now people finally understand that if things are going well in the north, they're going well in the rest of the province. That's the reason why Quebec takes the Cree seriously – they see the benefits of having an understanding with the Cree."

Despite the advances with the Quebec government, Saganash is unsparing in his criticism of the new Trudeau administration in Ottawa. He is especially critical of federal Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould, a member of BC's We

Wai Kai Nation, who he notes chose to retain as deputy justice minister someone who worked under Stephen Harper for 10 years.

"After the change of government – the change of hairstyle – nothing much has changed," Saganash said. "I've said this all along: it's been like this for 150 years. Although there's a new government and new ministers in front of us, the colonial machine behind all of them is the same."

But with the threat of climate change facing Eeyou Istchee and other communities in the north, Saganash feels the federal government will not be able to continue ignoring Indigenous issues.

"We're starting to see it with Site C, and we saw it with Muskrat Falls," he said. "We had to push them hard. But given the fact that a lot of our young leaders are educated now, more educated than in my time – they're strong and vocal and understand the issues very well – the resistance is going to become greater in Indigenous country, all through Canada and through the US. That's where we're headed, with this new government with the same old attitude."



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The contest runs from September 30, 2016, through November 30, 2016, and is open to members of the Cree nation living in one of the Native communities of Eeyou Istchee who are at least 18 years of age. Limit of one entry per person per day. The winner will be announced at 8:00 a.m. on December 14, 2016, during the Hydlo and Friends radio show on JBCCS.



The Santa workout

by Sonny Orr

Grasping the handle of the super-sized shopping cart, I join the long line of sweating, winter-coat-swaddled shoppers a hundred metres deep. We are all waiting our turn at the automated checkout machines. One of the machines has communication issues with its customer, someone who insists that the machine is wrong. An employee in an elf suit appears and quickly swipes out every memory of that customer's transaction and diverts him to another line-up for those who wish to deal with a human cashier. I've come prepared knowing that wearing only the lightest summer clothes will aid me in this human endurance challenge – the annual Christmas shopping day.

My slightly new, perfectly fitting shoes are working wonders on my feet as I pace confidently through the slush. My shoes are oil proof and nothing sticks to their suede-feeling surface. The insulated glove shields are wicking out my sweat so my semi-cotton-wool supporting socks don't slip down and bunch up, saving me from blisters. My thin mechanic's gloves take the multitude of shopping-bag handles and blood still courses through my fingers naturally protected by neoprene and some kind of wonder material. My hat has built-in lights to verify the price tag and my phone app locates the nearest lowest price for any item. My Santa legal clause is working like a charm and I'm actually having fun in the hardware department.

Yes, it's the season for shopping before the mad rushes for the best gifts. Thankfully the season is a good six weeks long and prepares us daily for the merriments and celebrations. So many people who tend to this annual feeling of giving and caring are like that for most of the year, kindly giving

and sharing daily. It is those people I wish to target in this column, as I see that Christmas has more to it than many people tend to think of.

In many ways, Christmas is like a feast during a yearlong fast. You get enough and give enough for the rest of the year. But the holidays are more than recognition of when Baby Jesus was brought into this world, but rather a culmination of many good traditions combined into one season of celebration.

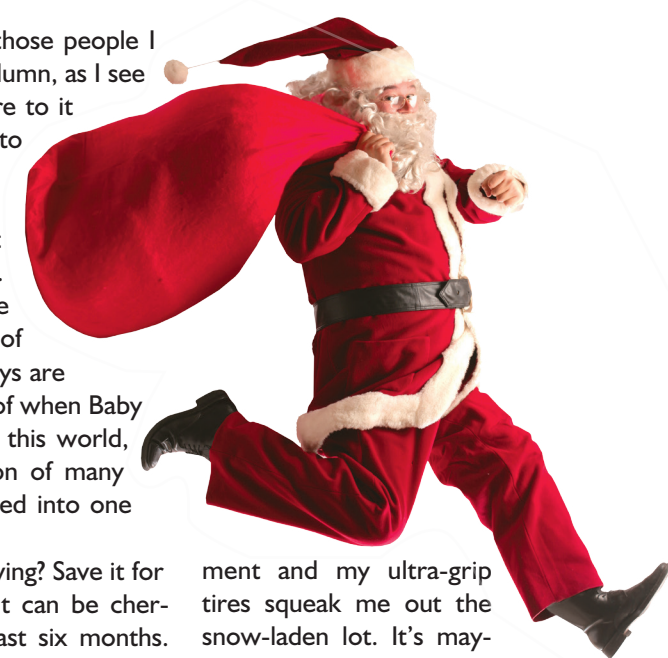
Feeling the tug of giving? Save it for the ones you love so it can be cherished forever, or at least six months. Cook up a storm and satisfy your soul. Tell stories to keep the attention tuned to a good feeling and not just the mouth-watering wafts of turkey and pie scents from the kitchen. Hang the stockings with care, surprise everyone and keep it a secret about who it's from or at least save the gift tags for grateful thanks later on. Gifts and foods chosen with care and extra duty taken for favourable memories. I still remember all the great care my mom put into Christmas dinner. No holds barred, it was a feast for the heart and stomach and fodder for memories. Today, when I bite into a Christmas fruitcake, I always compare it to my mother's and it is never as good as the memories of mom's cooking.

Ouch! Someone just rammed their shopping cart into the back of my feet. Ooh that hurts. But I wake up from my Christmas memories and start scanning up a storm of receipts. Miraculously, everything works and I'm quickly heading to the parking spot where I last left my vehicle. My fantastic shopping shoes crisply cling to the slippery pave-

ment and my ultra-grip tires squeak me out the snow-laden lot. It's mayhem everywhere with stranded drivers and pedestrians struggling to get around and spinning tires uselessly. I, with my years of driving off-road and in extreme winter storms, offer only tips to those exasperated drivers on how to manoeuvre gracefully into the slow-moving traffic.

No one cares, so I turn up the Christmas music and enter the next shopping mall into the GPS. It's just 10:30 in the morning and it's going to be a long day. I request the longest route and avoid the mounting traffic. The all-wheel-drive SUV keeps on trucking as the first mall has been conquered, unknowing that an actual happy shopper just breezed through its endless line of shops. I adjust my driving gloves and shades. Yes, I have finally given into shopping and taking it all on with military precision persistently scoring high with my partner's shopping-spree wish list. Yes, no complaints from me this year.

Merry Christmas to all you humbugs out there! Keep your chin up, there is a Santa!



Under the Northern Sky

Making things right

by Xavier Kataquapit



We need more people like Chief Walter Naveau of Mattagami First Nation and Fire Chief Mike Benson of Gogama, Ontario. They have proven themselves as powerful advocates for local people and the environment.

These two men, among many others, have for months been lobbying the Ontario government and the Canadian National Railway Company to finish cleaning up after a derailment of at least 20 CN rail cars spilled more than a million litres of oil into the Makami River. The company had suggested that much of what had to be done in terms of clean-up had been completed and that tests showed things were good. However, local people who have travelled and fished the waterways affected, complained this past summer that there were signs of oil in the water and many fish had been found dead.

Chief Naveau, supported by his council members, Elders, staff and community members joined with Fire Chief Benson and the townspeople of Gogama in a protest this past month before Naveau and Benson brought their case directly to Ontario Environment Minister Glen Murray. Initially it seemed as though their cause had been largely sidetracked after being raised in Question Period, however a number of fateful things occurred.

Naveau and Benson met with David Suzuki, who was by chance at a nearby event. Suzuki offered to lend his voice to their cause and encouraged them to continue their efforts. Through these combined efforts, things took a turn for a solution. When they returned to their home communities a little later, CN announced it would be going ahead with the clean-up. The company confirmed that it received the necessary

approvals to begin the cleaning of the oil-contaminated sediment from the bottom of the river which Mattagami and Gogama had been pushing for.

The Ontario government and in particular the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change provided the necessary action to give CN the opportunity to continue their clean-up before the waterways freeze. The work is going on now and involves local people from Mattagami and Gogama. What could have turned into an ugly confrontation between the public, government and CN has resulted in a sensible, timely and hopefully effective solution in terms of cleaning up the affected Makami River.

Rather than insisting on finding fault and continuing a confrontational approach, all parties are working on a solution to the tragic spill. Congratulations to all involved, and also a note of thanks to Wabun Tribal Council's Shawn Batise and Jason Batise for their efforts and expertise from the time the spill first occurred. Meegwetch to all for working hard to do the right thing for the people, the water, the land and the creatures that fly, swim and walk in our pristine wilderness.

I have known Chief Naveau for many years and

have learned that his passion, love and dedication to Mattagami are boundless. He constantly fights the good fight for First Nation people in his circle of Chiefs in the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation (NAN) and on the national scale with the Assembly of First Nations (AFN). When we need a voice to stand and be heard for our youth, our Elders and the land we can count on Naveau to rise bravely and speak. I have also learned that we can count on his kindness, openness and consideration for people in general and I have never seen him hold a grudge. He gets the job done and moves ahead.

We need more people like Naveau and Benson because they do the heavy lifting and help us all rise to make things right when they go wrong.



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